

Appn. No. 10/040,339
Amendment dated January 14, 2004
Reply to Office Action mailed 11/14/2003

REMARKS

Reconsideration is respectfully requested.

Entry of the above amendments is courteously requested in order to place all claims in this application in allowable condition and/or to place the non-allowed claims in better condition for consideration on appeal.

Claims 1-8, 11-24, 32-35, 37-40, 43-46, and 51-53 remain in this application. Claims 9-10, 25-31, 36, 41-42, and 47-50 have been cancelled.

The Examiner's rejections will be considered in the order of their occurrence in the Office Action.

Paragraphs 3 and 4 of the Office Action

The drawings have been objected to.

Submitted under separate cover and addressed to the Examiner is applicant's proposed amendment of the drawing. Specifically, in Figure 1 of the drawings as originally filed, additions of reference designators 41, 50, and 61 have been made in red ink.

Additionally, a copy of the proposed drawing amendment, certificate of mailing and return postcard indicating receipt of the proposed drawing amendment mailed on September 18, 2003 is also attached.

In light of the proposed drawing amendment, it is therefore submitted that the objection to the drawings as originally filed has been overcome, and withdrawal of the objection to the drawings is respectfully requested.

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Paragraph 5 of the Office Action

Claims 1-4 have been rejected under 35 U.S.C. §112 (second paragraph) as being indefinite.

The above amendments to the claims are believed to clarify the requirements of the rejected claims, especially the particular points identified in the Office Action.

Withdrawal of the §112 rejection of claims 1-4 is therefore respectfully requested.

Paragraph 6 of the Office Action

Claims 5, 6, 11 and 14 have been rejected under 35 U.S.C. §102(b) as being anticipated by Henderson et al. (5,944,764).

Claim 5, particularly as amended, is dependent from claim 1, and as such incorporates all of the limitations of claim 1. Claim 1, especially as amended is believed to be allowable, and by virtue of their dependence from claim 1, claims 5, 6, 11, and 14 are also believed to be allowable.

Withdrawal of the §102(b) rejection of claims 5, 6, 11 and 14 is therefore respectfully requested.

Paragraph 7 of the Office Action

Claims 5, 6, 11 and 14 have been rejected under 35 U.S.C. §102(b) as being anticipated by Henderson et al. (6,114,993).

Claim 5, particularly as amended, is dependent from claim 1, and as such incorporates all of the limitations of claim 1. Claim 1, especially as amended is believed to be allowable, and by virtue of their dependence from claim 1, claims 5, 6, 11, and 14 are also believed to be allowable.

Withdrawal of the §102(b) rejection of claims 5, 6, 11 and 14 is therefore respectfully requested.

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Paragraph 8 of the Office Action

Claims 5, 6, 11 and 14 have been rejected under 35 U.S.C. §102(b) as being anticipated by Gudat et al. (5,646,844).

Claim 5, particularly as amended, is dependent from claim 1, and as such incorporates all of the limitations of claim 1. Claim 1, especially as amended is believed to be allowable, and by virtue of their dependence from claim 1, claims 5, 6, 11, and 14 are also believed to be allowable.

Withdrawal of the §102(b) rejection of claims 5, 6, 11 and 14 is therefore respectfully requested.

Paragraph 9 of the Office Action

Claims 7, 8, 12, 13, 15 and 16 have been rejected under 35 U.S.C. Section 103(a) as being unpatentable over Henderson et al. (5,944,764) in view of Wright et al. (6,084,542).

Claims 7, 8, 12, 13, 15, and 16, are dependent from claim 5, and as such incorporates all of the limitations of claim 5. Claim 5, especially as amended is believed to be allowable, and by virtue of their dependence from claim 5, claims 7, 8, 12, 13, 15, and 16 are also believed to be allowable.

Withdrawal of the §103(a) rejection of claims 7, 8, 12, 13, 15 and 16 is therefore respectfully requested.

Paragraph 10 of the Office Action

Claims 37-40, 43-46 and 51-53 are allowed.

Paragraph 11 of the Office Action

Paragraph 11 of the Office Action states that claims 17-24 and 32-35 would be allowable if written into independent form with the limitations of the base claim and any intervening claims.

Claim 5, particularly as amended is believed to be allowable. Claims 17-24 and 32-35 are dependent from claim 5, and as such are also believed to be allowable.

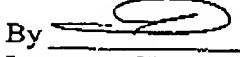
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CONCLUSION

In light of the foregoing amendments and remarks, early reconsideration and allowance of this application are most courteously solicited.

Respectfully submitted,

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